



Children should leave Alexandra Primary School being able to communicate effectively through speaking and listening, reading and writing with confidence and fluency for a variety of purposes. Alongside this, school will foster and enjoyment of literature and drama to enable children to be able to express their thoughts feelings and emotions confidently and effectively across the curriculum. We aim for children to be able:

- to communicate effectively and confidently in standard English;
- to listen to the spoken word attentively with understanding, pleasure and empathy;
- to read a range of materials fluently, critically and with understanding for enjoyment and for information;
- to write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes using spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and confidently.

### **Speaking and Listening**

Becoming confident speakers and being able to hold conversations are key skills that children need in later life. Speaking and listening activities also support reading and writing activities. Through our English teaching we will promote the following which we believe are important skills:

- To listen, evaluate, summarise and respect the opinions of others;
- To speak expressively and confidently upon a range of topics through class discussion, debates and drama activities;
- To provide a range of opportunities for children to talk and listen in formal and informal settings;
- To use drama and role play to develop confidence when addressing an audience;
- To use discussion to promote learning, and evaluation of opinions, through the use of asking and answering questions;
- To create an environment in which children feel safe when speaking about their thoughts and feelings.

### **Reading**

At Alexandra Primary we believe that reading is a multi-strategy approach to understanding the written word and is an essential life skill. It is not simply the decoding of letters on the page but involves the ability to read with understanding a wide range of different texts, including fiction, non-fiction and real world texts. Success in reading has a direct effect on progress in all areas of the curriculum and is crucial in developing children's self-esteem, confidence, motivation and independent learning. Consequently, it is important that all children develop the tools needed to read

for meaning and it is vital that children are given opportunities to practice using these skills so that they become confident, able and independent readers.

The 8 key strategies for reading comprehension are:

- context
- questioning and predicting
- visualization
- identification of key words and phrases
- identifying an understanding breakdown
- applying key strategies to repair the breakdown
- inference and deduction
- summarising the text

Once the children are confident with using these strategies they will be able to apply them to whatever they read no matter the context, for example understanding mathematical reasoning questions or explanations of scientific concepts. In addition, these strategies when used together with reading a wide range of texts, will help children to cultivate a varied and mature vocabulary that they can then use in their own writing.

Opportunities for Reading Development and promoting the enjoyment of reading at Alexandra Primary School:

- **Phonics and Decoding**  
Phonics and decoding is developed primarily through individual reading sessions throughout the school. Phonics and understanding of letter strands is also closely linked into the spelling strategies that are taught each morning. Children who are falling below ARE for decoding are referred to the reading recovery teacher for additional intervention.
- **Daily Reading Comprehension**  
Opportunities for comprehension development should be sought wherever possible, not only within English or dedicated comprehension lessons. Daily reading comprehension lessons should facilitate discussions about the text the class is reading and children should be encouraged to write their ideas down as annotations or thinking maps. Alongside this children should read independently to build confidence, stamina and fluency, as well as develop their experience of a range of books and authors.
- **Shared Reading**  
Many curriculum areas provide excellent opportunities for shared reading where children can explore texts, both fiction and non-fiction, with their class teacher and their peers. Reading comprehension strategies along with speaking and listening skills are developed through discussion of shared reading.
- **Individual Reading**  
Children should read a structured scheme book (Collins Big Cat) from the classroom library on a regular basis, this is in addition to other reading material used within lessons and comprehension texts. The book band document guides class teachers about which books are appropriate for the ARE of year group. Children who have completed all the book bands and are competent, fluent readers, will still be encouraged to take home a book from the class library. Selecting their own texts is an important part of developing independence and motivates readers to develop and discuss their reading preferences. Adults in school will hear a child read at least once a fortnight however children who are working below ARE should be heard more often. Comments about the book read and any areas of progress or difficulty should be recorded in the child's planner.

- **Independent Reading**

Reading Recovery Children need to be given the opportunity and encouragement to read regularly in order to build confidence, stamina and fluency, as well as develop their enjoyment and experience of a range of books and authors. Children should be given time to visit the school library and choose books of interest to them to read at home. Where time in the school day allows, periods of quiet, independent reading should be provided to the children.

- **Hearing books read aloud**

At the end of each day class teacher should model articulate and fluent reading to the children. The book that is read can be either a text that the children are working on during the day if needed or can be a separate reading book that is chosen by the class or teacher. Not only does this allow children to listen to an adult demonstrating effective reading strategies but also provides excellent opportunities for further discussion and consolidation of the comprehension strategies that have been taught so far.

- **Encouraging reading at home**

Co-operation and support from parents is paramount if a child is to become a successful and competent reader. At Alexandra Primary we strive to develop and encourage a strong partnership between home and school. It is our policy to send reading books home regularly and to encourage parents and carers to contribute to their child's reading development, welcoming comments in individual reading record book. All children are encouraged to read at home 3 times per week and record this in their planner, additional incentives are offered to promote this further.

### **Vocabulary, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (VGPS)**

School has a clear developmental programme for the introduction and acquisition of knowledge about grammar and punctuation. The aim is to develop pupils' curiosity about language and their capacity to observe and reflect, which will in turn enable them to develop more control and choice in their use of language.

Grammar and punctuation will be taught and modelled during the English lesson and should be explicitly referred to during direct teaching, then alluded to during the remainder of the lesson or within other relevant cross-curricular lessons. Teachers must demonstrate the use of grammatical features at word level (morphology), sentence level (syntax) and text level (conventions of style and organisation). Guided writing during the English lesson, provides supported opportunities for the pupils to focus on specific aspects of grammar and punctuation, while the group/independent sessions allows the children to demonstrate deeper understanding by applying the features to their own work, which in turn will be assessed by the class teacher.

A similar strategy can be used for spelling. There is an emphasis on the recognition of letter strings, visual patterns, the application of spelling conventions, the use of a range of word resources and the morphology of words. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some pupils will need to consolidate their phonic knowledge and skills from Key Stage 1.

An investigative approach is taken to the teaching of spelling with an emphasis on developing confidence and independence. It is expected that pupils assume increased responsibility by identifying their own spelling errors, making reasoned choices about likely alternatives and using a range of resources (dictionaries and word banks) for making corrections.

In every year group 15 minute spelling lessons occur daily following the No Nonsense Spelling scheme which directly links to the National Curriculum. These lessons will follow a model of teach, practise, apply utilising word or pattern investigation activities and games. In the teach session the rule or word will be taught explicitly with examples and the children will have the opportunity to investigate how these rules apply to other familiar and unfamiliar words.

## **Writing**

Alexandra Primary divides writing skills into two areas:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

At Alexandra Primary, we encourage our pupils to write across the whole curriculum and not just in their English lessons. We believe that by teaching the children to write at an age appropriate standard they will have the skills to be able:

- To be confident and independent in written language.
- To use the written word as an effective method of communication.
- To understand and use Standard English, with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- To develop the stamina and skills to write at length.
- To write in a range of ways and for different purposes.
- To express themselves creatively and reflect about the content of their work.
- To organise their thoughts and ideas logically so that they are appropriate for their intended audience.

Each writing unit should contain a mixture of different writing approaches but should always begin with exploration of similar texts for the children to break down into their relevant features. Opportunities for Speaking and Listening, including drama and role play should be used where possible to support text type analysis.

### **Modelled Writing:**

Modelled writing takes place within the English lesson; the teacher models the writing process to the whole class as an expert writer, articulating the process and using targeted questioning to assess whether the children can identify the features and grammatical structures used. During these sessions, the teacher also teaches how to plan, draft, edit and assess the writing.

### **Shared writing:**

Shared writing takes place within the English lesson; the teacher supports the writing process of the whole class and welcomes their suggestions for ideas and modelling the planning and editing process. Pupils are also taught how to assess each other's writing, giving valuable feedback. Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific writing strategies, oral response, higher order questioning and high levels of collaboration. The children join in individually or through partner work where appropriate.

**Guided writing:**

Guided writing takes place within the English lesson; a small group is guided by the class teacher or LSA. During guided writing the responsibility for writing shifts to the learner. Guided writing takes place with a group of children with similar writing targets/needs. During a guided writing session the children will write with an adult supporting. It is intended that guided writing provides a forum for children to demonstrate what they have learned about writing and to further develop and extend their writing skills. These children will have been identified following assessment from previous writing or a whole class activity; this allows the teacher to adjust their planning and meet the learning needs of specific groups of children. Teachers used guided writing as a way of rapidly responding to formative assessment.

**Planning and Assessment:**

Before each teacher starts a new genre, they complete a cold task to allow the children to demonstrate prior learning and allow the teacher to clearly identify any gaps in understanding. The children should be provided some time to plan and discuss before this cold task begins to ensure that they are able to write independently. This writing is marked using a wow and now comment and it then informs the future planning and allows for differentiated planning.

Towards the end of the teaching of the genre, children then complete a hot task, which is assessed using the age related statements. These two pieces of writing and the statements are then used to show the progress made and to make a judgement. Staff will monitor children's progress over time by keeping track of which ARE statements are met for each hot task.

Moderation of writing takes place frequently during INSET and phase meetings, with other local schools and with support from the LA. Our aim is to ensure that all staff are confident at moderating writing to ensure consistent standards across the school and clear progression of children's writing throughout the key stage.